

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Ron DeSantis**  
Governor

**Scott A. Rivkees, MD**  
State Surgeon General

**Vision:** To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

**FRANKLIN and GULF COVID – 19 UPDATE – 8/13/21**

For **Franklin County** updates straight to your phone: text **FranklinCV19** to 888777.

For **Gulf County** updates straight to your phone text **GULFCOVID** to 888777.

We are committed to the health and safety of all residents. The vast majority of cases in Franklin and Gulf Counties are unvaccinated individuals. The vast majority of all patients being hospitalized in Florida are unvaccinated individuals. Hospitals have seen a rapid spike in hospitalizations due to the spread of the more contagious delta variant of COVID-19.

**There are several ways identified to help bring the pandemic under control:**

- 1. The best defense against COVID-19 is the vaccine.** COVID-19 vaccines are effective and are a critical tool to bring the pandemic under control. The vaccine helps protect you and the health of the broader community. If you still get COVID-19, the vaccine has been proven to reduce the severity of illness, hospitalization, and death.
- 2. STAY HOME** if you are not feeling well. **STAY HOME** if you are waiting on test results. **STAY HOME** if you are positive for COVID-19. We cannot stop the spread of COVID-19 if you do not follow your isolation orders.

**Stay home unless you need medical care. You can be with others after:**

- At least 10 days since symptoms first appeared **and**
  - At least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication **and**
  - Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving
- 3.** Please do not send your child to school if your child has any symptoms of COVID-19. Common symptoms include: headache, fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea. We often hear about “really bad headaches” or allergies. These could be COVID-19 symptoms.
  - 4.** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has revised the emergency use authorization for REGEN-COV monoclonal antibody therapy authorizing it for emergency use as **post**-exposure treatment for COVID-19. REGEN-COV is not authorized to prevent COVID-19 -- only after exposure to the virus. Treatment with REGEN-COV is not a substitute for vaccination against COVID-19. People should talk to their health care provider about whether the use of REGEN-COV for post-exposure prophylaxis is appropriate for them. To find out more, go to <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>
  - 5.** If you have questions about COVID-19, talk to a medical provider. Call the health department. We appreciate your patience on the phones. We will continue to add to our frequently asked questions to help educate our residents. Please read all of the Frequently Asked Questions.

**What is going on with cases in our counties?** Let's look at July 2021 data:

**Franklin:**

Week	Positive	Total tested	Percent positive*
7/02/2021	3	47	6.38%
7/09/2021	15	76	19.74%
7/16/2021	26	132	19.70%
7/23/2021	73	249	29.32%
7/30/2021	110	350	31.43%
8/06/2021	136	359	37.88%

**Gulf:**

Week	Positive	Total tested	Percent positive*
7/02/2021	22	93	23.66%
7/09/2021	46	192	23.96%
7/16/2021	76	328	23.17%
7/23/2021	128	444	28.83%
7/30/2021	155	550	28.18%
8/06/2021	96	440	21.82%

*\*How to understand percent positivity for new resident cases: residents who test positive divided by all residents tested during a time period.*

#### **How well are Franklin and Gulf doing with vaccination efforts?**

Franklin: 46% (Franklin population babies and up: 12,295 | Age 12 & older with vaccine: 5,125)

Gulf: 46% (Gulf population babies and up: 14,829 | Age 12 & older with vaccine: 6,051)

State: 65%

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQS)**

#### **Has the quarantine guidance changed for students?**

**Yes.** The quarantine guidance for school-age children attending public schools has changed. If your child is identified as close contact to a positive case, you will receive a letter from the school with detailed instructions. An example letter is attached at the end today's update. At this time, the school-specific quarantine guidance does not apply to younger children in daycare settings. We will keep everyone updated as information becomes available.

#### **What about booster vaccines for COVID-19?**

As soon as information becomes available to provide booster vaccines, we will send out guidance to our counties.

#### **"I know someone who got the vaccine and still got COVID-19. How can this be?"**

Vaccine breakthrough cases are expected. COVID-19 vaccines are effective and are a critical tool to bring the pandemic under control. The vaccine is effective in reducing in the severity of the illness, hospitalizations, and death.

However, no vaccines are 100% effective at preventing illness in vaccinated people. The risk for COVID-19 infection in fully vaccinated people cannot be completely eliminated as long as there is continued community

transmission of the virus. Some variants, like Delta, are more contagious. The best protection to greatly reduce the severity of illness, hospitalization and death is the vaccine.

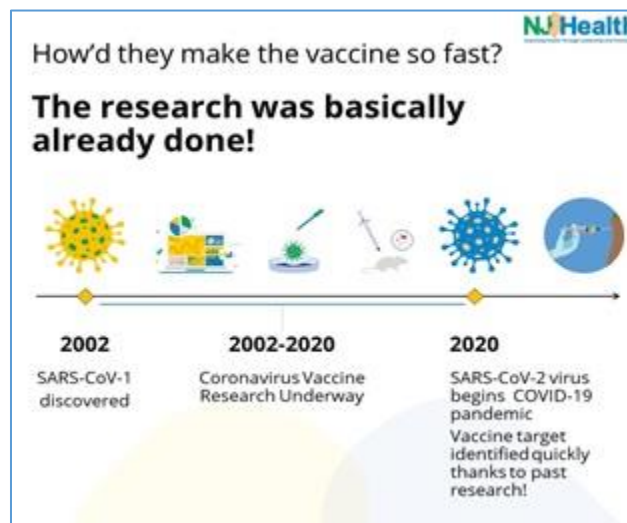
### **Are the vaccines safe?**

COVID-19 vaccines are safe and effective. <https://youtu.be/7bBmQaX2k4w>

COVID-19 vaccines were evaluated on tens of thousands of participants in clinical trials. The vaccines met the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) rigorous scientific standards for safety, effectiveness, and manufacturing quality needed to support emergency use authorization (EUA). Millions of people in the United States have received COVID-19 vaccines since they were authorized for emergency use by FDA. These vaccines have undergone and will continue to undergo the most intensive safety monitoring in U.S. history. This monitoring includes using both established and new safety monitoring systems to make sure that COVID-19 vaccines are safe.

### **How was a vaccine rollout able to happen so fast?**

Actually, it didn't happen fast at all. That's because scientists have been working on a Coronavirus vaccine for nearly 20 years.



### **Can receiving a COVID-19 vaccine cause you to be magnetic?**

**No.** Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine will not make you magnetic, including at the site of vaccination which is usually your arm. COVID-19 vaccines do not contain ingredients that can produce an electromagnetic field at the site of your injection. All COVID-19 vaccines are free from metals.

### **Do any of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized for use in the United States shed or release any of their components?**

**No.** Vaccine shedding is the term used to describe the release or discharge of any of the vaccine components in or outside of the body. Vaccine shedding can only occur when a vaccine contains a weakened version of the virus. None of the vaccines authorized for use in the U.S. contain a live virus. mRNA and viral vector vaccines are the two types of currently authorized COVID-19 vaccines available.

### **Will a COVID-19 vaccine alter my DNA?**

**No.** COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA in any way. Both mRNA and viral vector COVID-19 vaccines deliver instructions (genetic material) to our cells to start building protection against the virus that causes COVID-19. However, the material never enters the nucleus of the cell, which is where our DNA is kept.

### **I've been identified as a close contact to a positive case. What do I do?**

#### **General Quarantine guidance – vaccinated adults and students:**

If the individual who has been exposed to COVID-19 has been completely vaccinated for COVID-19 and it has been at least 14 days since the last dose of the vaccination series was administered, they do not have to quarantine following an exposure.

They should however monitor themselves for symptoms for the 10 days following exposure. If symptoms occur, they should seek testing and reach out to the health department for further guidance.

#### **General Quarantine guidance – unvaccinated adults:**

If the individual who has been exposed to COVID-19 has not been vaccinated for COVID-19, the vaccination series has not been completed, or it has not been at least 14 days since the final series dose was administered, the individual should quarantine.

Release from quarantine exists in 2 ways currently:

1. Quarantine at home for 10 days and return to normal life on day 11
2. Quarantine at home, have a negative COVID-19 test completed on or after day 6, remain home without symptoms through day 7 and go back to normal life on day 8 (AS LONG AS the individual continues to be symptom free).

#### **General Quarantine guidance – unvaccinated students:**

If the student who has been exposed to COVID-19 has not been vaccinated for COVID-19, the vaccination series has not been completed, or it has not been at least 14 days since the final series dose was administered, the student should quarantine.

Release from quarantine exists in 2 ways currently:

1. Quarantine at home for 7 days and return to normal life on day 8
2. Quarantine at home until day 5, have a negative COVID-19 test completed on (or after) day 5, and return to normal life after receipt of negative test result (AS LONG AS the student continues to be symptom free).

### **What if an individual has previously tested positive for COVID-19?**

If an individual (adult, child or student) has previously tested positive for COVID-19 and it has been within the last 90 days they are not required to quarantine. The individual should monitor themselves for symptoms. If symptoms should develop, they should isolate at home and contact their primary care or the health department for further guidance.

### **Key Terms**

**Isolation** – this occurs when an individual has COVID-19.

**Quarantine** – this is when an individual has been a contact to someone with the COVID-19 virus.

**Close contact** – defined as being less than 6 foot for more than 15 minutes around someone who had COVID-19.

For questions related to COVID-19, talk to your healthcare provider or contact the health department:  
Gulf: 850-227-1276, Franklin: 850-653-2111.

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DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**EXAMPLE LETTER FOR STUDENT (Just so you can see what it looks like)**

Dear Parent(s) or Legal Guardian(s):

The Florida Department of Health in Franklin/Gulf County has been informed of a case of COVID-19 at your child's school. Your child has been identified as a close contact to this case. The last date your child had close contact with the case was \_\_\_\_\_ (last date of exposure). As of today, your child is on Day \_\_\_\_\_ of the quarantine period. The quarantine period is through \_\_\_\_\_ (date quarantine is completed).

Your child may return to school if it has been two weeks since they received their second dose of the Pfizer vaccine or if your child has had COVID-19 in the past 90 days from the recent exposure. Continue to monitor your child's health through the 10-day quarantine period. If your child develops any COVID-19 symptoms, seek testing and medical evaluation.

We recommend a modified quarantine with testing for children that have not received both doses of the Pfizer vaccine or it has been less than 2 weeks since your child's second dose. We advise keeping your child home to watch for symptoms. On Day 5 of quarantine, have your child tested. Your child may return to school on Day 5 or after with a negative test result and they are well. If you choose not to test your child and they are well, your child may return to school on Day 8. If your child develops any symptoms of COVID-19, seek testing and medical evaluation.

If your **child has any of the following conditions** that may cause serious illness from COVID-19, **please call your doctor for any additional guidance:**

- Cancer
- Cerebrovascular disease
- Chronic kidney disease
- Moderate to Severe Asthma
- Diabetes
- Heart conditions
- Obesity BMI  $\geq 30$  kg/m<sup>2</sup>
- Pregnant or recently delivered
- Smoking, current or former
- Down syndrome
- Solid organ transplant recipient or any sort of bone marrow or stem cell transplant
- Severe primary immunodeficiencies / Asplenia
- Persons living with HIV
- Treatment with immunosuppressive medications such as cancer chemotherapy, any immune treatment blockers such as TNF blockers, high-dose corticosteroid therapy (e.g. >40 mg daily); treatment with biological agents such as drugs used to treat autoimmune disease and some cancer therapies
- Cystic fibrosis with or with lung or another solid organ transplant
- Sickle Cell Disease
- Liver Disease

**Florida Department of Health in Gulf County**

2475 Garrison Avenue • Port St. Joe, Florida 32456  
PHONE: 850-227-1276 • FAX 850-227-7587

**Florida Department of Health in Franklin County**

139-12<sup>th</sup> Street • Apalachicola, Florida 32320  
PHONE: 850-653-2111 • FAX 850-653-1727

**FloridaHealth.gov**

